

TRUE NORTH IMAGING

Communication Procedure

Objective: To communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability and train True North Imaging (“TNI”) Employees who communicate with clients on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

Procedures:

Employees will:

- In accordance with the TNI Accessible Customer Service Policy, communicate and interact with persons with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence, and provides equality of opportunity while taking into account the person’s disability;
- Engage with persons with disabilities to have a shared understanding of how best TNI can assist them;
- Contact their manager for guidance and direction in situations where they feel they need additional support;
- Recognize that a person may have more than one disability and apply any necessary accommodations, as outlined in this procedure;
- Provide information or documentation, as required, in a format that takes into account the person’s disability and accommodates his/her need for an accessible format. TNI and the person with a disability will agree upon the format to be used for the document or information;
- Obtain consent from the person with the disability before engaging in conversation that includes confidential information, and ensure a Consent Form is signed by the appropriate parties when a support person acts as an intermediary.

Upon hire, all Employees will be trained to have working knowledge and understanding of various communication methods helpful to persons with disabilities including:

- Pen and paper;
- Typing back and forth;
- Adjusting speaking style to speak more slowly or clearly;
- Electronic communication systems; and
- Gestures.

Clients Who Use Assistive Devices

Employees will:

- Engage with the person with disability to understand how best they can help with their assistive device. For example, ask permission before pushing someone in his/her wheelchair and if conversing for a long period, sit down, if possible, to be at eye-level with the person in the wheelchair; and
- Ask permission to assist with any assistive device unless in an emergency.

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Clients Who Have Hearing Impairment

Employees will:

- Identify themselves by name and look directly at the person when approaching him/her. Use a normal volume to speak and be attentive to cues that the person may be having difficulty hearing the conversation. Employees may speak slightly louder or suggest moving to a quieter location;
- Explore other means of communication, such as writing or electronic. If the person reads lips, do not obstruct your face, and if possible stand directly in front of him/her. Ensure pen and paper are available for exchanging notes;
- Ensure that the person using an assistive device receives help. Ask if he/she needs assistance with the device, and support him/her to use the device. For example, a person may use communication aids/boards, hearing aids, or a personal amplification device. If a hearing alert dog is present, Employees are not to pet or otherwise distract the service animal; and
- Communicate directly with the person with the disability, rather than a support person (e.g. a sign language interpreter), if present.

Clients with Vision Loss

Employees will:

- Identify themselves by name when approaching the person with a disability, and speak directly to him/her in normal tones;
- Address the person by name, to ensure the person understands someone is speaking to him/her;
- Communicate directly with the person with the disability, rather than a support person, if present;
- If the person uses an assistive device (e.g. a person may use a white cane, magnifying glasses or screen magnifiers, or be accompanied by a guide dog to help them interact in a situation), ask if he/she needs assistance with the device and support him/her to use the device as needed;
- Offer to read any brochure or document to a person with low vision;
- Offer assistance to guide a person, walking slightly ahead and provide information on the surroundings related to uneven ground/steps/obstacles;
- Provide specific information or direction, using terms relative to the person during verbal communication. For example, to their left or right, providing guidance on position of obstacles, distances, and change in direction; and
- At the end of the interaction, let the person know when you are leaving the room.

Clients Who Have a Hearing Impairment and Vision Loss

A support person will likely accompany a client who has hearing impairment and vision loss, or the client will have a card indicating their preference in how to communicate. Utilize the above accommodations when communicating with a client who has a hearing impairment and vision loss.

Clients with Mental Health Disabilities

Employees will:

- Engage with the client to have a shared understanding of how they may be of assistance to him/her, recognizing that symptoms may not always be present or he/she may be having difficulty controlling their symptoms; and
- Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication.

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Clients Who Have Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Employees will:

- Engage with the client, to have shared understanding of how they may be of assistance when recognizing the disability is not always obvious. Ask the client to repeat any information not understood;
- Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication. Provide small bits of information in simple terms at one time. When speaking, use plain language and avoid technical terms. Encourage the client to ask you to repeat any information they may not understand;
- Ask the person if any assistive device may help them interact in the situation. If they need assistance with the device, support them to use the device as needed. For example, a client may wish information read aloud to him/her; and
- Communicate directly with the person with the disability, rather than a support person, if present.

Clients Who Have Learning Disabilities

Employees will:

- Engage with the client to have a shared understanding of how they may be of assistance to them, recognizing various communication difficulties;
- Provide information in a clear and concise manner, listen carefully, and restate information to ensure a shared understanding of the communication;
- Break-up lengthy conversations to shorter ones, allowing the client to process the information;
- Encourage the client to ask you to repeat any information that was not understood; and
- Ask the client if an assistive device may help him/her to interact in the situation. If he/she needs assistance with the device, support them to use it. For example, a client may use pen and paper, tape recorder, computer, personal data managers, or calculator.

Clients with Physical Disabilities

Employees will:

- Engage with the client to have a shared understanding of how to be of assistance, recognizing he/she may take longer to accomplish a task or have a particular way of helping themselves;
- Ask if the client needs help with any assistive device, and provide support as needed. For example, a client may use a wheelchair, scooter, crutches, cane, walker, or personal oxygen devices;
- If needed, assist the client with handling brochures or documents and reaching for items when required; and
- Ask permission to move a client's assistive device unless in an emergency situation.

Clients with Speech or Language Difficulties

Employees will:

- Engage with the person to have a shared understanding of how to be of assistance, recognizing the client may take longer to communicate;
- Ask questions that require one or two word answers and do not interrupt the client when they are responding; and
- Ask if they need assistance with their assistive device and support them to use the device as needed. For example, a person may use pen and paper, computer, communication board, or speech generating device.

Serving Clients Who Use a Support Person

Employees will:

- Refer to the *Use of Support Persons Procedure*
- Ensure persons with disabilities have access to their support person; and
- Understand and recognize circumstances where a support person will be required to ensure health and safety and communicate this need to the person with the disability.

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Responsibilities

Managers will:

- Ensure Employees are trained on how to communicate with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability; and
- Track completion of training.

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